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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [CY](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY: TALAT VISIT SHOWS GOT INTERAGENCY  
AGREEMENT ON CYPRUS

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary and comment: "TRNC President" Talat enjoyed full head of state honors during a January 3-4 visit to Ankara that created broad interagency agreement within the GOT on an effort to re-energize comprehensive settlement negotiations on Cyprus. Talat's meetings with President Gul, Prime Minister Erdogan, and Defense Chief of Staff Buyukanit were warm and, unlike his January 2007 visit here, free of tension. The GOT's Justice and Development Party (AKP) leadership is committed to urging the international community and the UN to press the new Greek Cypriot president, whoever it may be, to engage in serious negotiations. It is also committed to supporting Talat in those negotiations and ensuring the Turkish side does not play the role of naysayer. GOT leaders, including Buyukanit, also appear to support Talat's pursuit of confidence-building measures in the short term, to include the opening of the Lokmaci crossing. This is the first sign we have seen that the GOT -- perhaps even with the support of the military -- may be prepared to turn its attention seriously to solving the Cyprus problem. President Gul's apparent resolve is refreshing. If so, it could be a plus for Turkey's flagging EU aspirations as well. End summary and comment

12. (C) MFA Cyprus Department Head Can Oztas (protect) told us Talat's January 3-4 visit to Ankara went very well and offered an opportunity for GOT leaders to begin to seek interagency agreement on addressing the Cyprus issue in the near-term. They also proffered a proper welcome to Talat as a visiting head of state. Former President Sezer had declined to invite Talat for two years because of opposition to Talat's perceived supportive "attitude" toward reaching an accommodation with Greek Cypriots. When Talat had last visited Sezer, he was not given head of state honors and stayed in a hotel. On this visit, Talat stayed at the Camli Palace, a state residence offered to visiting heads of state, and was greeted upon arrival at the presidential palace with a 21-cannon salute.

13. (C) During the two-day visit, Talat had one-on-one meetings with President Gul and PM Erdogan, in addition to delegation talks and a meeting with Parliamentary Speaker Toptan. Talat, Gul, and Erdogan later had a private dinner to continue their discussions. On second day of the visit, Talat met with Turkish General Staff (TGS) Chief Gen. Buyukanit. Oztas said all meetings went very well and allowed Gul and Erdogan to achieve consensus within the GOT and with Talat on moving forward with serious negotiations following the presidential elections in the ROC. Gul committed to seek during his visit to Washington and New York the following week the support of UNSYG Ban Ki-Moon for a reenergized UN initiative to solve the Cyprus problem.

14. (C) Oztas noted Talat's meeting with TGS CHOD Gen.

Buyukanit as the most surprising aspect of the visit. Buyukanit reportedly thanked Talat three times for Talat's cooperation with Turkish forces on the island, representing a near about face from meetings last January following Talat's announcement on removal of the Ledra Street footbridge. Oztas could not comment on whether the absence of tensions during the meeting represents a fundamental shift in TGS views on the broader Cyprus issue. It does, in his view, indicate a willingness on the part of the military to go along with the AKP-led government's plan to support Talat's efforts to engage with whomever emerges victorious from Cypriot elections.

¶5. (C) Talat and his Turkish hosts discussed moving forward with confidence building measures. Oztas thought the opening of the Lokmaci crossing could take place even if the demarcation issue is not resolved, something he said UNSYGSR Moeller has indicated previously. Following Greek Cypriot elections, the Turkish side will look to engage immediately. Oztas said MFA U/S Apakan made the point that serious negotiations could be completed within a year. Talat was more circumspect, and flexible, on how long negotiations might last, but all agreed they need to start as soon as possible. Gul underscored the seriousness with which the GOT approaches this proposed new negotiating period, saying he does not want the Turks to be the ones to get up from the table and say no.

¶6. (C) From the standpoint of which Greek Cypriot presidential candidate would be most receptive to negotiations, Oztas noted that Talat and Papadopoulos are not on the same wavelength and Papadopoulos does not seem serious about entering into substantive talks on a comprehensive settlement. The GOT really would prefer Christofias or Kasoulidies, both of whom would be willing to negotiate.

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While Kasoulidies might be most flexible, he seems least likely to win. If Papadopoulos does win, the Turks will be prepared to deal with him as well. DISI and AKEL supporters have a long, unfortunate history of fierce opposition, which makes the prospect of supporters of one voting for the other in a run-off against Papadopoulos problematic. Nonetheless, both Kasoulidies and Christofias have focused their attacks on Papadopoulos during the campaign. This allows one to at least hope that whoever finishes third might be willing to throw his support behind the other in the run-off against presumed front-runner Papadopoulos.

¶7. (C) Whoever emerges as the next president of the ROC, Oztas emphasized the need for pressure from the EU and the United States on the Greek Cypriots to engage seriously in negotiations in an effort to solve the Cyprus problem for good. He noted the Swedes intended to gather like-minded countries in New York with a view toward getting the U.S. and other UNSC member states to press the UNSYG to intensify UN involvement as well.

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